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Denton, Clara F.

Sammie's Lesson.

1909





Class PS 635

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"SAMMIE'S LESSON."

A Dialogue for a Girl and a Boy.

To be given on Flag Day or any other patriotic occasion.

Characters: "Uncle Sam," "Columbia."

Scene: Plain stage.

Costumes: Uncle Sam—this part should be taken by a tall and slender boy. He wears a blue swallow-tail coat decorated with large brass buttons, red vest and white trousers with blue stripes on either side.

Hat, an old-fashioned silk "plug." He should wear a wig of long, straggling gray hair.

Columbia—White gown with red, white and blue scarf draped across the breast. Wears on the head a pasteboard band made high in the center and tapering toward the back, covered with blue cambric or paper, and freely decorated with small, white stars. She carries a large flag wrapped up tightly and held in place by rubber bands.

"Uncle Sam" enters R., "Columbia" L. They meet in C.

UNCLE SAM—Well, I declare for it, if that isn't you, Columby; mighty glad to see you; haven't laid eyes on you for quite a spell. Where you been?

COLUMBIA—O, looking after the women.

UNCLE SAM—Keep you pretty busy, don't they?

COLUMBIA—Indeed they do, since they got into politics and are running nearly all kinds of business.

UNCLE SAM—Haven't gone in for exploring yet, have they?

COLUMBIA—No, and I tell you I'm glad they haven't. Now, what do you suppose would happen if two women should declare that each was first at the South Pole?

UNCLE SAM—Ugh! don't mention it; I shouldn't want to be there to hear or see. But what is it you have there, wrapped up so carefully?

COLUMBIA (*Pulling off the wrappings and the bands*)—Here, take hold of it, and you can answer your own question. (*Uncle Sam takes hold of the*

upper corner, Columbia walks away holding on the other end, and thus displays the American Flag. School rises and sings "Star Spangled Banner," Uncle Sam and Columbia holding the flag until close of song.

UNCLE SAM—Well, it's the same old rag, Columby!

COLUMBIA—So it is, Sammy, and I was just wondering if you know all about it that you ought to. Who designed our flag?

UNCLE SAM—That's easy; George, of course.

COLUMBIA (*Sternly*)—"George!" Indeed! George who, I should like to know?

UNCLE SAM—O, come now, Columby, don't be a stupid; my George, of course. There is but one George for me, just as there is but one Abraham. I know more than that, too, Columby; I know that if it hadn't been for a woman, Mrs. Betsey Ross, of Philadelphia, we should have had six pointed stars on our flag just as we have on most of our money, now.

COLUMBIA—Yes, that's right, Sammy, but you see, Mistress Betsey didn't mean to have that flag look like the English coat of arms in any way, so she showed the General how easy it was to cut a five pointed star. That was the way they had them in Holland and other countries in Europe, you know.

UNCLE SAM—Yes, I have always thought Betsey was a pretty level headed girl in that.

COLUMBIA—Then I suppose there is but one Betsey for you just as there is but one George and one Abraham.

UNCLE SAM—Yes, yes, Betsey for mine. I don't know of but one other girl in the world whom I like so well, and that is my sister Columby.

COLUMBIA—Umph! You'd better like me! I'd just like to know what you'd do without me.

UNCLE SAM (*Pushing back his hat and scratching his head*)—That's so, what *should* I do? I know one thing that I couldn't do; I couldn't sing "Hail Columby, happy land," or "Columby, the gem of the ocean," but O, I say, Columby, let's put this flag up somewhere; I'm tired of holding it, aren't you? (*He turns to go up.*)

COLUMBIA (*Taking him by the arm*)—Here, now, Sammy, come back; aren't you ashamed of yourself? Straighten up, now, and hold up the dear old banner, until I see how much you know of your lesson. Where was the first display of the American flag at a military post?

UNCLE SAM—That's easy. The first American flag was made by the United States Bunting Company. It was twenty-one feet long and twelve feet wide, and it was presented by the Hon. Benj. Butler. It was hoisted over the capitol at Washington on February 24th, 1866. There, don't I know my lesson well?

COLUMBIA—What in the world are you talking about? The first American flag made in 1866? You are nearly a hundred years behind in your date, Sammy. The first American flag ever displayed over a military post was in——

UNCLE SAM—Hold on, there, you said the first *American* flag, didn't you?

COLUMBIA—Of course, we are not talking about the English flag nor the French flag, nor——

UNCLE SAM—Yes, that's what I thought. Well, up to the date I have just given you, all our flags were made from English bunting. We had the flag all right, but we didn't know how to make the stuff that made them until the date just mentioned. But go on about your military display. I don't think I know about that. It's one of the things that I have forgotten.

COLUMBIA—O, of course, I know all about you, Sammy, and you've been interrupting me so much that I'm a good mind not to tell you a single thing about it. If you've only forgotten it, no doubt you will think of it again. Come on, guess; we'll put the flag away. (*Tries to pull it away from him.*)

UNCLE SAM—No, you don't, Columby; I was ready to put it away once, but I'm not now, so go on with your story. Let me see, where were you? "The first American flag ever displayed over a military post was"—go on Columby.

COLUMBIA—Was at Fort Schuyler, now the city of Rome, N. Y., in August, 1777. They tore up sheets for the white stripes, and took any old bits of scarlet clothing they could find for the red stripes. The blue field was made from an old coat belonging to the captain of the fort. So you see that flag wasn't made of English bunting.

UNCLE SAM—You're right, Columby; you always are.

COLUMBIA—Maybe you know who first displayed the stars and stripes on a naval vessel?

UNCLE SAM—Yes; I know that all right; that was my good old pal Paul Jones himself.

COLUMBIA—And when was it first unfurled in battle?

UNCLE SAM—That was on the banks of the Brandywine in 1777. And now tell me, if you can, who first called the flag "Old Glory?"

COLUMBIA—O, I know that well enough. It was given that name in 1831 by a sailing captain of Salem, Mass., named Wm. Driver. He died in 1886.

UNCLE SAM—All right, Columby. I guess you know your lesson as well as I do. It is a dear old banner, isn't it? And I guess we are both willing to die defending it.

COLUMBIA—Indeed we are, Sammy. Do you know it is said that although this is the youngest nation the "Star Spangled Banner" is the oldest flag of all, and that it has waved over more victories on land and sea than any other flag in the world. (*Columbia waves it.*)

BOTH—Long may it wave.

(*They march out R., Columbia leading and waving flag; patriotic music.*)*

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